

MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION INSPECTOR CAREER INTERN PROGRAM - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What is the MSHA Inspector Career Intern Program?

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) Inspector Career Intern Program is designed to obtain talented and motivated individuals who have the skills to help the agency move into the 21st Century. To support MSHA's goal of hiring and developing the best Inspectors to protect the health and safety of our Nation's miners, MSHA has instituted the use of the Federal Career Intern program. The authority for the Federal Career Intern is [5 CFR 213.3202\(o\)](#) and [Executive Order 13162](#).

MSHA's Inspector Career Intern Program is intended to provide an integrated method to hire and develop well-trained and well-qualified Mine Safety and Health Inspectors. Inspector career interns will complete a formal training and development program that will provide an understanding of mine health and safety programs, expand technical skills, and build professional credibility. Inspector interns will participate in a series of training modules, including at least 20 weeks at the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley, West Virginia augmented by on-the-job training at mine sites and the job location. Internships will typically last 24 months. Individuals who successfully complete MSHA's Inspector Career Intern Program will be eligible for promotions and permanent placement within MSHA.

Q: Who is eligible to apply for the MSHA Inspector Career Intern positions?

All U.S. Citizens who have a valid State issued driver's license and meet the basic experience and physical qualification requirements for GS-1822, [Mine Safety and Health Inspector](#) positions may apply. Additionally, some positions may require applicants to have experience in certain categories of mines (e.g., coal vs. metal and nonmetal, or surface vs. underground), or those with particular expertise in special aspects of mining (e.g., electrical, roof control, ventilation, etc.).

Q: How do I apply for MSHA Inspector positions?

- Mail or e-mail an application with the required information by the closing date specified in the job announcement. Indicate the locations for which you are applying and if you are claiming veteran's preference. Incomplete applications which fail to include your phone number, address, and information on citizenship and basic qualification requirements will not be considered.

- Attend the required Inspector Federal Career Screening for the specific job location. Seating for the employment screening is limited to the size of available testing facilities, therefore advance registration is encouraged. Employment screening reservations will be made on a first-come, first-serve basis based on the date your application is received by MSHA's Human Resources Division in Arlington, Virginia. Completed applications may also be accepted on the day of the employment screening on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you are excluded from the screening because seating capacity is reached, your application will be considered for a future employment screening session for your location. Advance registrants who do not arrive on time may lose priority seating. Applicants who arrive after testing commences will not be tested that day.

- Pass math and writing tests administered at the Inspector Federal Career Screening Session. To participate in a the screening session, applicants must:
 - Present a valid photo ID at the test site prior to being tested;
 - Be able to start testing on time and at the location specified in the vacancy announcement;
 - Comply with all instructions of the testing administrator(s);
 - Use of laptops or calculators is prohibited during the tests;
 - Tests cannot be retaken at the same career screening session;
 - Applicants may take the writing test upon passing the math test;
 - Only personnel designated by the MSHA test administrators may enter the testing room; and
 - Test results will be valid for two years and are transferable to all entry-level inspector positions.

- Participate in Structured Interviews with MSHA personnel, including at least one MSHA manager or supervisor. The same questions will be asked of the applicants at the screening session and will take approximately one hour to complete. Structured interviews are specific to the needs of each field or district location; therefore, structured interview results will not be transferable to inspector positions in other job locations. Applicants must be available to interview at the Federal Career Job Screening for each job location to which they have applied.

Q: If I'm selected for this position, what are the conditions of employment?

- US Citizenship;
- Frequent travel (some Inspector positions require 5-15+ nights per month);
- Two year training period consisting of formal classroom training conducted at the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley, WV,

- supplemented by on-site developmental training at mine sites and the job location;
- A valid state issued driver's license;
 - For males between 18 and 25: Registration with the Selective Service System;
 - Periodic Drug Testing.

You must also successfully complete the following:

- Pre-employment physical and medical examination;
- Pre-employment Drug Testing;
- Background and suitability check.
- Financial Disclosure Statement. All MSHA employees are prohibited by regulation from having any interest, direct or indirect, in any mine or mining company which may be directly affected by the work of MSHA through its investigations, technical research, or other activities. All employees must have on file a certification statement that they hold no such interests.

Q: What information must be included in my application to the MSHA Inspector Career Intern Program?

Certain information is needed to evaluate your qualifications and eligibility for the job and distinguish you from other candidates; therefore, your application must contain the following information:

- Vacancy announcement number, Title, Series and Grade for the job for which you are applying (Example: MSHA-04-93; Metal or Coal Mine Safety Inspector, GS-1822-9). If your application does not indicate a grade, you will be considered only at the highest grade for which you are eligible.
- Location(s) for which you are applying (Mandatory)
- Full legal name and mailing address (Mandatory)
- Social Security Number (Mandatory)
- Country of Citizenship (Requires U.S. Citizenship) (Mandatory)
- Daytime and evening phone numbers (Mandatory)
- E-mail address (If you do not provide current and accurate contact information, you will not receive confirmation of your reservation. If you only provide a mailing address, you also may not receive timely confirmation of your reservation or eligibility to participate in the Inspector Career Screening Session, therefore an e-mail address is preferred.)
- Relevant work experience that addresses the specialized experience requirement described in the "basic qualifications required" section of the job announcement. Provide the name and address of your employer, dates of employment (month and year), your job title,

description of duties, and number of hours worked per week for each job listed, and supervisor's name and phone number for each job listed. (Mandatory)

- Veteran's preference: Indicate the type of preference claimed (5 or 10-point). Please bring the necessary documentation (i.e., DD-214, SF-15) with you to the Inspector Career Screening Session. You must provide the necessary proof to receive preference.
- Federal Status: If you are a current Federal employee, indicate your current title, series, and grade.
- Education: If you qualify for an Inspector based on post high-school education, include name, city, and state of schools and colleges/universities attended as well as date of diplomas. Also include type and year of any degree received and majors. If you attended college but did not receive a degree, indicate total credits earned and indicate whether semester or quarters hours. Do not send transcripts unless requested.

Q. Why are math and writing tests required for MSHA Inspector positions?

MSHA has extensively evaluated the skills and training for its inspectors to competently perform mine safety and health inspection, enforcement, and related compliance assistance activities. Basic math skills are required to successfully carry out various inspection activities, including those related to: hoisting, ventilation, ground control, load haul and dump, health sampling, electrical, and materials storage and handling. Writing skills are essential to producing clear, accurate, and understandable reports of inspections and investigations.

Q: What does the math test include?

Applicants are given 60 minutes to complete a math test consisting of 30 multiple-choice questions covering basic arithmetic and math reasoning. The questions are geared towards solving mathematical problems which are similar to those encountered during regular mine inspections. *Applicants may not use a calculator to take the test.* To prepare for the math test, applicants should be prepared to calculate the following types of equations related to many of the math questions:

- Converting Percentages to Decimals (Example: $37\% = .37$)
- Converting Decimals to Percentages (Example: $.314 = 31.4\%$)
- Adding, subtracting, dividing, and multiplying Decimals (Examples: $23.4 \times .45 = 10.530$; $40.6 + 8.06 = 48.66$; $24 - 13.67 = 10.33$;
 $42/1.5 = 28$)
- Changing Fractions to Decimals (Examples: $.75 = \frac{3}{4}$; $\frac{3}{4} (.75) + \frac{4}{5} (.80) = 1.55$)
- Adding, subtracting, dividing, and multiplying Fractions

(Examples: $2/3 + 3/4 = 1 \frac{5}{12}$; $7/8 - 2/3 = 5/24$; $3/4 \times 2/3 = 1/2$; $4/9$ divided by $5/6 = 8/15$)

- Calculating the perimeter, circumference and area of circles, rectangles, and/or trapezoids (Formulas will be provided:
 - Area of rectangle: $A = w \times h$;
 - Area of a circle: $A = \pi r^2$;
 - Area of a trapezoid: $A = [(b_1 + b_2)/2]h$;
 - Perimeter of a four-sided figure: $P = s + s + s + s$;
- Circumference of a circle: $C = 2\pi r$ or $C = \pi d$.

Q: What does the writing test include?

For the writing test, applicants are provided with an illustration of a mining accident and a series of facts about the accident. Applicants are given 60 minutes to prepare a written *legible* report consisting of a minimum of three paragraphs, but no more than the two pages provided. The applicants' written responses will be evaluated **only** on their ability to communicate in writing, and not of their knowledge of mine health and safety.

Q: What are structured interviews?

Managers and supervisors have traditionally relied on interviews to help them identify the best candidate. This reliance is appropriate, if managers and supervisors use a properly developed structured interview. Structured interviews consist of questions based on job analysis, detailed pre-determined rating scales, and trained interviewers to make the interview more job-related and systematic. The structured interview questions are based on the Department of Labor's [Competency Model](#) for Mine Safety and Health Inspector/Specialist positions. The results of the structured interviews will be used to determine the list of qualified candidates and to make a final selection decision. Structured interviews for MSHA inspector positions will generally include a list of general and/or technical questions that the applicant will be asked to answer. The same questions will be asked of all the applicants and will take approximately one hour to complete.

Q: Does veteran's preference apply to the MSHA Inspector Career Intern Program?

Applicants who have received an honorable or general discharge after serving on active military service may be eligible for veteran's preference. If your military service began after October 15, 1976, you must have a Campaign Badge, Expeditionary Medal, or a service-connected disability to receive 5 point preference. If you are a disabled Veteran; you received a Purple Heart; you are the spouse or mother of an 100% disabled

Veteran; or you are the unremarried widow (or widower) or the mother of a deceased Veteran, you may receive 10 point preference. On the date of the inspector career screening, you must provide the documentation to support your claim or you will not receive preference. If you are claiming 5-point preference you must submit a copy of your DD-214. Claims for 10-point preference require a DD-214, a completed SF-15 Application for 10-point Veterans' Preference Application, plus the required proof of eligibility as indicated on the back of that form.

Q: What are the physical requirements for MSHA Mine Safety and Health Inspector positions?

Applicants and employees must be physically able to perform arduous duties efficiently and without hazard to themselves or others. A medical examination is required for all applicants for inspector positions. Medical conditions that constitute a hazard to safe and efficient job performance are disqualifying. The presence of medical disorders that would be aggravated by the environmental conditions of these positions and thereby hinder safe and efficient job performance are also disqualifying. Remediable defects and/or curable diseases will not permanently disqualify an applicant for the appointment, but may result in the applicant's suspension from the appropriate referral list pending submission of medical evidence or correction of the condition.

Physical requirements include: (1) Both legs required; (2) Uncorrected distant vision must test at least 20/50 Snellen in one eye and 20/70 in the other, correctable with eyeglasses (contact lenses are not acceptable) to at least 20/40 Snellen in one eye and 20/50 in the other. Near vision must be sufficient to read, without strain, printed material the size of typewritten characters. Normal depth perception and field of vision are required, as is the ability to distinguish basic colors; (3) No hearing loss of more than 40 decibels average in the 500, 1000, or 2000 Hz ranges; (4) Ability to operate a motor vehicle; and (5) Ability for rapid mental and muscular coordination simultaneously.